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Military Review

THE GERMANS are again engaged in the cheerless process of trading space for time—cheerless, because in this instance they are giving up a good deal more than geography. The strategy of their defense, obscure a week ago, has become clear as it was carried out. In the east it has been to hold the line of the Oder from Fürstenberg to the sea, with a bridgehead in West Pomerania north of Stettin large enough to permit the assembly of a mass of maneuver for the counter-attack that must eventually be made if they are not to see the north German plain go to the Russians. Danzig and its area, like the similar enclaves at Königsberg, in Latvia and in the west of France, are assigned the duty of tying down considerable Allied forces to a blockading job, their communications with the central Reich being maintained by sea and air.

In the west the effort on March 5 was to hold the salient of the Saarland on lines following the old frontier on the south, the Saar on the west and the Eifel range on the north, with Cologne and possibly Bonn as strong bridgeheads to the west bank, from which counter-strokes could be launched against any effort to cross the river in the face of the tangled mass of buildings in the Ruhr. As a technical military operation the attainment of these lines, both east and west, has been skillful. In the east the weight of the Russian offensive has been diverted north long enough to let the defense positions west of the Oder be thoroughly organized. In the west nearly all von Rundstedt's really valuable troops and much of his heavy equipment got successfully away across the Rhine. Up to March 5 the strongest offensive yet mounted on the western front had taken only 50,000 prisoners, and these mostly Volkssturmers.

But the Germans' is a negative achievement, a fatal success. In the east they have been forced to give up the best positions from which a counter-attack on a large scale might be launched, and in gaining time, they have also given it to the Soviets, who have been able to bring up reserves and supplies, establishing themselves solidly in Brandenburg. In the west the Nazis have lost two cities of considerable industrial importance. They have allowed a good part of the Ruhr to come within range of Allied heavy artillery, which should make any industrial operations there quite impossible. When the last elements retreat through Wesel, they will have delivered over to the Allies a hundred-mile stretch of the Rhine left bank, which means that large German forces indeed would be needed to prevent a crossing. In the process they have also lost Trier, the shield of the whole Moselle region as Aachen was of the region just overrun.

The question is why the German general staff has been willing to accept such liabilities for a gain in time so small as that represented by having to face a general Allied offensive in (say) April or May instead of February. The answer is furnished by some of the figures cited by Colonel Conrad Lanza in the Command and General Staff School's *Military Review*, where he considers the over-all strategic situation as of the end of 1944. He estimates that as of January 1, the German armies had just about made good their losses. A million and a quarter occupation troops in countries lost to the Allies were now put into combat duties; another 400,000 were combed out of German industry, and very nearly another million men were obtained from Ukrainians, Poles, etc., and put into German uniform.

But this recovery (as Colonel Lanza does not point out) is purely numerical. Only the occupation troops

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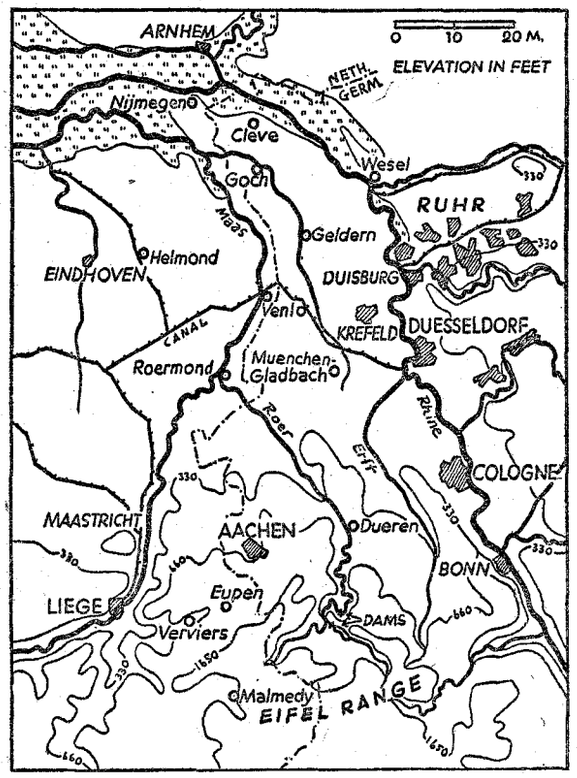
had had basic training, and they lacked substantial combat experience. The situation is that with which we were faced early in 1942—an army not equal to our military responsibilities, with a large number of recruits who simply cannot be made into soldiers overnight. The German solution has not been radically different from that we ourselves adopted; to fight delaying actions with the available means, waiting for anything else till the new men could be trained and equipped.

The first of these new German formations should begin to appear with the spring (even then their training period will be rather short) and there will presumably be some German attempt at a comeback at that time. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that while we were training our army, we gave up positions around the perimeter of the world; the Nazis have had to abandon part of their central citadel. There is also the fact that the new men coming into our armies were the pick of the nation; the Germans are down to the scourings. Their equipment and their leadership may still make them formidable soldiers, but not on the scale of the Wehrmacht of 1940.



To the Rhine

Von Rundstedt has made an extraordinarily good retreat from the whole central area of this map, sacrificing very little of his equipment, while most of the men lost seem to have been distinctly second-rate troops. But Germany has now reached the point where any sacrifice whatever goes beyond its battlefield effects. Not only has she lost Krefeld and München-Gladbach, but Düsseldorf and a good part of the Ruhr are now within range of heavy guns from the left bank, and German industrial production, heavily hit in Silesia, is still further reduced.

Churchill and Roosevelt at Yalta

Prime Minister Churchill expounded the Yalta agreement to the House of Commons with his usual skill and vigor. The chief objectors were a small group of Conservatives who had made their own the cause of the dethroned Polish government in London. They were badly defeated, and Parliament has now accepted the responsibility for the boundary decisions and the new political arrangements for Poland. The affirmative vote included an overwhelming majority of all parties; it was partly a consequence of conviction, partly an expression of the absolute necessity which every sensible Englishman feels for coöperating with the Soviet Union. It is to be hoped—though the hope will probably be disappointed—that the Poles will now settle down to establishing national unity on the basis of a decision which in essence is fair and cannot be reversed.

Mr. Roosevelt's report to Congress was a different sort of thing altogether. Constitutionally, he was not defending his action and asking for approval of it. No vote followed his appearance. He added nothing new in the matter of specific information. The great importance of what he said lay in the fact that he did speak in this place and in this way. Congress is jealous of the power and leadership of the President; a minority of the Senate can, by dissent, upset any plan for world peace which depends on ratification of a treaty. Mr. Roosevelt adroitly emphasized this responsibility. I have done the very best that is possible, he implied; it is not perfect, but any peace must rest on compromise. If you don't want the development of spheres of influence in handling questions like Greece and Poland, you must consent to the United States playing a hand along with the others. Now it is up to you.

Yalta and Reparations

At Yalta the Big Three agreed to reparations in kind. In doing so they recognized the responsibility of Germany to help repair the damage she has caused, and the need for her to do so. They also evaded the troublesome problem of transfer, which upset the payment of reparations in money after the last war.

It must be recognized, however, that Germany cannot pay in the form of coal, minerals, agricultural products or manufactured goods without restoring her own production. Those who wish to pauperize Germany cannot expect much in the way of reparations in kind. Another sort of reparations—the use of labor battalions—does not raise this issue. Nobody can question the justice of making Germans help to rebuild what they have so ruthlessly destroyed. Mr. Roosevelt's approval of the Russian plan is to this extent justified. Care should be taken, however, that when the Germans are returned to their own country they are not so ignorant and embittered as to furnish the material for another dictatorship of revenge. The

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Soviet Union could do itself no greater disservice than to treat them like slaves or beasts of burden.

The Act of Chapultepec

The treaty adopted a few days ago by the Inter-American Conference in Mexico City and christened the Act of Chapultepec, institutionalizes the principle of collective security on a regional scale. By making counter-action to aggression the joint responsibility of all the nations of the Western Hemisphere, the Act, if effectively applied, should serve as a mighty check on a potential aggressor. That it was created as a specific warning to fascist Argentina's bellicose intentions, there can be no doubt. While its immediate practical effect is to recognize the reality of United States military power in this part of the world and to legalize American intervention if the peace of the Americas is threatened south of the Rio Grande, it does not preclude genuine collective action by the other American nations after industrialization has made them militarily stronger than they are now. Even at the present time the combined power of Brazil, Uruguay and Chile, for instance, would probably be sufficient to halt possible Argentine aggression without aid from the United States. Finally, the Act does not contravene the international-security scheme envisaged by the Dumbarton Oaks plan. On the contrary, it supplements that plan. One of the major weaknesses of the old League of Nations was the failure of its Covenant to provide for regional guarantees against aggression, to be enforced, and for all practical purposes enforceable, only by those powers geographicallly close to the theatre of war. Indeed, this line of criticism of the old League was the chief argument in favor of regionalism by many Latin American international lawyers, especially the Chilean Alvaro Alvarez, who may well be called the father of the Act of Chapultepec.

Lewis and the Miners

Probably John L. Lewis is, outside the rank and file of his own union, the most universally disliked citizen of the United States. Disregarding the need for full and steady production of coal during the war, he has twice permitted a stoppage of work in the mines, and now threatens to do so again. This is scabbing on the other labor leaders who have put aside the strike weapon during the war, and it is laying up untold trouble for the labor movement by arousing the hatred of soldiers and millions of plain citizens. The miners continue to follow him because his stiff-necked though short-sighted tactics continue to get results.

It is too bad that the justice of the miners' claims has to be judged against the background of Lewis' tactics. Normally subject to unemployment incident to a badly disorganized industry, they continually press for higher wages and shorter hours in anticipation of the postwar slump. A guaranteed annual wage would, if it could be achieved, be a genuine reassurance. The 10-cents-per-ton royalty now demanded, if it could be wisely administered, might provide a desirable cushion against the perils of demobilization. But there are natural fears of entrusting it to a union so dictatorial in its structure and so recklessly led. What might Lewis, whose ambition and vanity seem to be unbounded, do with the money? In consideration of such questions, the present leadership of the United Mine Workers is a handicap to the rank and file.

A Plan to Abolish Slums

Putting an end to slums in America is an ambitious project; yet nothing less is envisioned in a new bill which will soon be introduced in Congress by Senators Wagner, Ellender and Murray. Aimed at the postwar period, it would provide the comparatively small sum of $110 million annually for subsidies for slum clearance and mixed public and private housing enterprises. The great new factor in the housing situation is that the credit of municipal housing authorities is now excellent. They can get almost unlimited funds at low interest, at present less than two percent. Under the new plan, a city can buy up a big slum area, even in the heart of the congested district (heretofore public housing has mostly gone into the outskirts). The land thus acquired will be developed as a unit, with parks, playgrounds, schools, libraries, hospitals and both public and private housing projects. If land is sold to private builders at less than what the city paid for it, the federal government will help make up the difference. This is a great forward step beyond public-housing projects of the past, which have usually been limited to residential construction and a few stores, and confined to the land required for these purposes. Efforts will also be made to solve the problem of rural slums, by erecting new farm buildings and selling them to tenant farmers and others with, if necessary, no down payment. Here is a real man-size job for postwar America, one that should help to keep employment and prosperity high and at the same time go far toward eliminating the slums which are a disgrace to a country as rich, actually and potentially, as ours.

The French Dilemma

Perhaps the most important inference to be drawn from General de Gaulle's recent speech on the future of the French economy is that he is not a master of politics. While political intransigence was his major asset as long as power was an aspiration rather than a reality, he now seems to be falling between the two stools of foreign and domestic policy. In exile, his political strength vis-à-vis the great powers derived primarily from the unanimous support he was given by the resistance movement inside France. Although not legally recognized, he could rightfully speak in the name of France. This the General seems to have for-

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gotten. Unless he reverses his present attitude of conservatism in economic matters and adopts an economic program more in line with the demands of the resistance movement, he and his faithful supporters will become nothing but another political faction in the scheme of French politics. For the trend of French politics continues to be to the Left. De Gaulle should know that without the support of the Socialists and the Communists his foreign policy of, perhaps, justified opposition to the dictates of the Big Three, making France the potential leader of the smaller European nations, is in danger of carrying France into useless, sterile isolation.

Bretton Woods

On February 28, Americans United for World Organization sponsored an all-day conference in Washington on the Bretton Woods agreement. Treasury and State Department officials and monetary experts met with representatives of 106 national organizations to answer questions on the technical aspects of the proposed agreement and to discuss its implications for the future. Representatives of the NAM and the American Bankers' Association sat alongside labor representatives, church leaders, women's-organization heads and American Legionnaires and Kiwanians. They learned what the agreement is all about and took the information back to their own groups. It would be surprising if wide support for the pending legislation did not result.

Representative Brent Spence, chairman of the House Banking and Currency Committee, has introduced the bill authorizing Bretton Woods in the House. Senators Wagner and Tobey have introduced it in the Senate. House hearings began March 7 and will last for perhaps three weeks. It is hoped that the House will vote its approval prior to the April 25 meeting of the United Nations and that Senate action will follow soon thereafter.

Aubrey Williams and the Senate

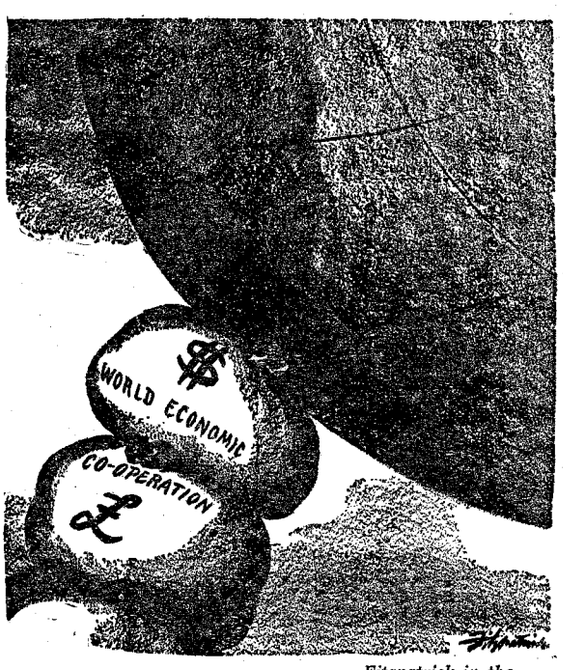
We don't know whether Aubrey Williams will be confirmed by the Senate as head of the Rural Electrification Administration. We do know that he is a good man for the post, that not a single valid argument has been offered against him, and that the opposition, which is united solely by the fact that it doesn't want rural electrification, has engaged in an unequaled display of calumny and religious bigotry. Williams, by his refusal to stultify himself or compromise in order to get the job, has increased his already high reputation as a man of honor and dignity. We deeply regret Vice President Truman's attempts, on grounds of mere expediency, to persuade Williams to withdraw his name rather than risk defeat in the Senate. Truman here was thinking and acting as a politician; Williams, in his refusal, as a man of principle.

America and Dumbarton Oaks

THE UNITED STATES is about to make one of the most important decisions in its whole history. Shortly after the San Francisco conference of the United Nations, a treaty will undoubtedly be offered the Senate proposing to bring this country into the new league. Such an important step will require long and careful debate in the Senate; and it should of course be preceded and accompanied by a nationwide debate as well.

The chief arguments of those who say the United States should stay out may be summarized as follows:

The world is still ruled by selfish powers which have not actually renounced the sort of political and economic imperialism and power politics that have in the past tended to produce war and will continue to do so in the future. The organization of the new Security Council and, in particular, the voting procedure if a country is charged with aggression, both show that this is not a genuine world league but an organization dominated by the three chief Allies—who are presumably about to win this war—plus a window dressing of lesser Allies and neutrals. The neutrals, however, will not be permitted to attend the San Francisco meeting or the subsequent peace conference —which accounts for the haste with which some of them are now declaring war on the Axis. Americans, especially, do not want the new organization to be empowered to make decisions including the use of American armed forces, without ratification by Congress. Some alarm is also expressed lest the new plan be used to freeze the status quo so firmly that even revolution against a dictatorship, or freedom for a conquered territory, like India, might be impossible.



Fitzpatrick in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Necessary Prop for the Postwar World

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Certain of the smaller states, while supporting the new league, have offered criticism of details. Thus the Poles in London have asked the inclusion of the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms, a council of 15 members instead of 11, no regional subdivisions and no action regarding disarmament or boundaries. Latin America wants more power for the Assembly, a world-wide bill of rights, registration of all treaties, and formal adoption by every state of the principles of international law. It is reported that Latin America also wants at least one of its republics to be sitting at all times on the Security Council.

Those who argue that the United States should join the new organization make, in general, these points:

It is true that the new organization is imperfect, but this is an exceedingly imperfect world, in which progress is almost invariably by evolution, not revolution. If the new organization can get under way, we have at least a chance of doing something about imperialism, whereas if there is no organization, such efforts must depend upon the dubious and tedious matter of increased social enlightenment within each of the imperialist powers. Moreover, if there is another war every couple of decades, progress in the emancipation of colonial peoples will at least be suspended temporarily, if not completely halted.

One of the pronounced evils of the world today is competitive private capitalism operating internationally. The new league, it is argued, provides the best and indeed the only present hope of curbing the excesses of international competition—and of international monopolization—and thereby increasing the likelihood of prosperity and peace. While it is true that none of the great powers has surrendered or appears willing to surrender any part of its national sovereignty, all of them have made some concessions—probably about as many as are to be expected in this stage of world development.

The so-called Russian reservation requiring a unanimous vote of the Big Five in the Security Council—a reservation which the American Senate would undoubtedly have written if the Russians hadn't beaten them to it—is a fictitious issue, since the use of sanctions against any of the major powers undoubtedly means war. The Vandenberg plan, which has the support of well over two-thirds of the United States Senate, would solve the problem of the use of American troops without our consent, by confining such use to keeping down Germany and Japan. The scheme is sensible, moreover, in that to the largest possible extent it separates treatment of the vanquished enemy in this war from the creation of the new world order. An important reason for the death of the old League of Nations is that it tied the peace treaties too closely to the Covenant.

Moreover, the new plan contains important provisions that were left out of the old one. The Economic and Social Council of eighteen members, elected by the Assembly, to handle social, economic, labor and humanitarian agencies, should go far toward remedying the worst mistake of the former League, which was to center its attention on political matters and almost ignore economic ones. The Economic and Social Council can and should deal with such matters as dividing up the world's dwindling natural resources; allocation of markets and foreign investments among exporting powers; prevention of cutthroat competition by any one nation; leveling of tariffs and other artificial trade restrictions; maintenance of decent minimum standards of wages, hours and working conditions throughout the world.

New Republic readers will hardly need to be told that in this debate we are with the side which recommends joining the new organization. Some, though not all, of the criticisms of it are well taken; but unlike many of its enemies, we try to consider what are the alternatives; it is a mark of mental immaturity to act without taking into account whether you have any choice and, if so, what it is. Throughout the history of man on this earth there has always been war. Because of changed technological conditions, it costs the world far more than ever in the past and at the same time the advance of civilization has for the first time created a real possibility that war can be abolished. Even a one-percent chance is better than no chance, and is worth taking. We are like a man who has fallen into a deep well with ten feet of water in it and a ladder whose lowest rung is several feet above his head. He has succeeded in getting, let us say, one finger on that bottom rung. The ladder is an inferior one; the rung is rough and hurts his hand. Nevertheless, he had better hang on to it, strengthen his grip, get both hands on the ladder, if he wants to avoid the alternative, which is to drown.

This is the fifth and last of a series of editorials on "The World after the War." – THE EDITORS

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

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Postwar Britain at Home

THOSE in the United States who discuss Anglo-American economic relations usually begin by considering Bretton Woods, or foreign-trade rivalry, or civil aviation, or oil, or cartels, or shipping, or tariff and other trade barriers. These things are important, but their proper place is at the end of the discussion, not at the beginning. If one is to understand the sources of British action, he must see the future landscape as the British see it; he must know what direction they expect to take and why, and what the first steps are. The foreground of postwar planning in Britain is occupied by the domestic scene. The major objective is a better and a more secure life for the British people. International policies and plans spring, not from theoretical abstractions, but from calculations about the requirements of the kind of nation which it is hoped Britain will be.

The concept of this new nation is not stated either in empty slogans or in utopian generalities. There are a few who still cling to the idea that welfare will automatically be served if obstructions are removed from the operation of a theoretically self-balancing system of private enterprise. There are a few at the other extreme who expect no important gain without some sort of universal revolution. But these static views do not influence either the general public or those with responsibility in government and industry. Rather, these ask what it is in particular that they want to achieve, and what is the best way to achieve it, given the circumstances. Once the details of the separate programs are sketched in, it is possible to ask how they will fit together, and what they will mean for the economy as a whole. Let us therefore summarize (with extreme brevity) the chief proposals.

Social Security. – When Sir William Beveridge published his governmentally sponsored study proposing an expanded and unified social-security plan, it produced an international sensation. After a good deal of prodding in Parliament, the government—which represents an overwhelming majority of Conservatives, with an admixture of Laborites for the duration of the European war—came out with a plan of its own, differing from the Beveridge plan in some respects but, on the whole, no less universal. Without technical details, its main features are:

1. It is a compulsory scheme of national public insurance which includes everybody without exception—employees, the self-employed, housewives, adults who earn nothing, children, and people over working age.

2. It insures against all the important hazards of life. The employed will be insured against unemployment. All will be insured against sickness. All will be assured pensions when they retire. Women, whether married or unmarried, are entitled to maternity grants. There will be family allowances for each child after the first. There will be widows' pensions, death grants.

3. The administration of all these forms of insurance will be unified.

4. The proposed benefits are substantial, in relation to the British standard of living at its lower levels. The costs will be met partly out of contributions from those who can contribute, but considerably more than half will be paid out of public funds.

There is no effective opposition to some such plan; on the other hand it is not now regarded with unbounded enthusiasm. It is a last line of defense to provide resources to those who need them and to assure more social solidarity. Alone it is merely a device to share more equitably whatever means of life may be available to the nation. The big job is to increase those means.

Health. – It is clearly improvident to compensate people for sickness without taking steps to improve their health. This, too, is now accepted as a national obligation by the mainly Conservative government. In a White Paper issued in 1944 it projected a National Health Service "to ensure that everybody in the country—irrespective of means, age, sex or occupation—shall have equal opportunity to benefit from the best and most up-to-date medical and allied services available." Under this plan all the people will be able to obtain hospitalization, medical advice and "treatment of every kind entirely without charge except for the cost of certain appliances."

Naturally such an ambitious scheme requires much more than old-fashioned health insurance: it requires reorganization and expansion of the facilities and the practice of medicine. There has been voluminous discussion and much disagreement as to just how this should be done. That it will be done there is little question. There will almost inevitably be a coördination of hospitals, clinics and other facilities area by area, a wide establishment of small health centers practising group medicine, encouragement to scientific research, expansion both of medical education and of means to keep practitioners up to date. The government promises to preserve free choice of doctor for everyone, and private medical practice in so far as patients and doctors prefer it. It is noteworthy that all British plans for health are on a much higher level of discussion than the mere proposal to give everyone the means to pay a doctor, through insurance or otherwise. They are just as much concerned with the kind of medical service people get, and with its improvement.

Housing. – Britain had, in spite of her public-housing program and the stimulus it provided to private

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building, an insufficiency of decent dwelling space before the war. There has been no building for five years, except that necessary to house war workers. One house out of every three has been damaged by enemy action; large districts of the cities in the south of England have been devastated. Is it any wonder that the demand for rebuilding the nation is so urgent that the only question is how rapidly and how well it can be done?

Lord Woolton, Minister of Reconstruction, estimates that four million new homes can be built in ten years, as against the same number in twenty years between the wars. This assumes a planned increase of one-quarter in the number of building workers, full and steady employment for them, and the utmost desirable development of prefabrication and mechanization. It allows for one-half the labor in the industry to be employed in other forms of construction, such as repairs, building of factories, schools, hospitals, community centers—all urgently required.

A program like this, large as it seems, will be far from meeting the public demand, as is realized by the politicians. The Conservative Party wants more emphasis on temporary housing. The Liberal Party executive demands four million houses, not in ten years but in five. The Labor Party probably will not allow itself to be outbidden.

It is assumed as a matter of course by all concerned that the job cannot be properly planned and executed unless the government does it. There is no question that almost all the dwellings erected in Britain for many years to come will be subsidized, and that the government will plan and stabilize the building industry at the highest attainable level of productivity and employment.

Land. – Obviously it is impossible to rebuild a nation intelligently unless there is good planning. There have long been local planning authorities in England, as in the United States. In 1943 a national Ministry of Town and Country Planning was established. It has been given large powers to coördinate local plans in the interest of regional and national requirements, and to see that planning is done wherever local authorities do not do it. But planning for new construction is ineffectual so long as individual landowners obstruct it.

The government appointed an expert committee to investigate this question. This body—the Uthwatt Committee—reported that the rights of private owners as they now exist do obstruct good planning. It recommended that in the case of all undeveloped land outside town areas, no private owner should be allowed to develop his land; this right should be vested in the state. Compensation to the owner for loss of this right should be fixed on the basis of the value *to the state* of the development rights it acquired. This value should be determined for the region as a whole, and divided fairly among the owners. Land required for actual development or redevelopment, whether outside or inside a town, should be purchased by the public authority, at the prewar price level. Future annual increase in value of privately owned, developed land should be subject to a 75-percent tax.

The government to which this report was made is dominated by Tories, and most of the big landowners are Tories. Naturally they did not like it. The government therefore countered with a scheme according to which no private owner in Britain may develop his land without consent of the planning authority; local authorities can acquire whatever land they need for development subject to the approval of the Minister of Town and Country Planning, and the price paid for such land shall be the prewar price, for a period of five years. This proposal, radical as it may seem to us, represents the extreme Right—the landlords—in Great Britain. The extreme Left is represented by the Labor Party proposal that all land in the nation be forthwith acquired by the state.

It is a strange experience for an American to be in a "capitalist" country where the most respectable and influential newspaper—the *Times*—prints a running debate in its weighty correspondence columns about nationalization of the land.

Education. – The appeasement era brought to many Englishmen a sense of the danger of education too much dominated by the "old school tie." A thorough revision and democratization of education for other reasons also was thought necessary. The government White Paper on the subject projects a plan to make available primary, secondary and higher education for all "capable of profiting thereby." School attendance was already compulsory from the ages of five to fourteen; it is now proposed to establish enough nursery schools to meet the rapidly growing demand, and to extend the school leaving age first to 15, then to 16. Part-time continuation education is also to be made compulsory to the age of 18, for those who are not in full-time institutions. In addition, adult education will be extended. The system is to be made more flexible, more opportunities are to be provided for technical, commercial and art studies, the quality of teaching is to be improved, systematic attention to health is to be provided.

This by no means exhausts the list of important proposals. Scientific nutrition and fair distribution of food during the war have improved British health, in spite of shortages. Never again will widespread undernourishment be tolerated, even if it is necessary to resort, as many believe it will be, to governmental wholesaling of staples and to food subsidies. School lunches for all are an accepted part of the health program. Likewise the improvement in community life which has sprung up during the war through sharing of danger and voluntary service will be fostered in peace.

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Full Employment. – The suggestion which covers all the other reforms with its wings is the simple proposal that Britain shall never again be allowed to suffer a serious depression, with mass unemployment. Again, this is not a scheme of incompetent dreamers or political irresponsibles. The economic analysis of the general cause of unemployment was developed over a period of many years by a leading academic theoretician—Lord Keynes; it has been debated and finally accepted almost unanimously by British economists, including the veteran student of unemployment, Sir William Beveridge; and a pledge to maintain a high level of employment has been made by the government itself, in a White Paper issued by Lord Woolton.

Political critics on the Left, like Aneurin Bevan, say that the Tories do not really mean it, that it is just a scheme to catch votes. Theoretical critics who admit the sincerity of the pledge question the means recommended to make it good. There is a good deal of honest difference of opinion concerning how the policy should be implemented. But there is no important disagreement about the goal or the government's responsibility in the matter. Any future Cabinet which repudiated that responsibility would be unceremoniously thrown out. So would any government which allowed a large volume of unemployment to continue long.

Aside from theoretical details, which are not generally understood, the common sense of the public convinces it that the government not only can abolish unemployment but also can create a labor shortage whenever it wants the products of labor urgently enough, as in war. There is absolutely no question of the need for the products of labor after the war—as in housing, provision of all the consumers' goods which have been scarce, medical service, teaching. Indeed, the real question is whether there is enough manpower. There is no disposition to leave the responsibility for financing and planning this great project entirely with private enterprise, which has failed so miserably at it in the past. Indeed, intelligent businessmen do not want the responsibility. Most employers have little understanding of the nature of the problem. In so far as they think about it at all, rather than being preoccupied with the absorbing tasks of their several establishments, they would no more dream of taking over this job than they would have dreamed of asserting control over the planning, financing and fighting of the war.

Theoretically, the central problem is to maintain a flow of new investment or other spending equal to the amount of money currently saved. The government White Paper proposes to do this by installing a National Investment Board which will obtain advance information about proposed private investment, attempt to adjust it in advance to the required amount, and fill any gaps by variations in public works or other governmental expenditures. Beveridge believes this program inadequate; he would aim not at compensating for private fluctuations but at stabilizing the whole economy on an expanding trend, by budgeting it just as government expenditures have always been budgeted and by making sure that its various factors—such as consumers' spending, saving, private investment and fiscal policy fit one another and the planned total. This would, he believes, require several unorthodox devices, but would not abolish essential freedom or a large sector of private enterprise. Labor Party spokesmen think the job cannot be done without a broad program for nationalizing the land and basic industries.

Whoever is right in theory, internal circumstances favor success in the endeavor at least for a period of years. The War Cabinet now has an economic general staff, composed of highly competent and well trained economists, which is at work on the problem and which will be a permanent institution. The postwar internal demand will be almost limitless. Government finances are sound and under control. Reconstruction plans leave an unprecedentedly large sector of the economy —including the lion's share of construction—under immediate governmental direction.

The reader cannot have failed to notice how the list of reforms swells the items in the governmental budget. The public contribution to social insurance, subsidized housing on a grand scale, "free" medical service—which means in fact that the cost will be paid through the agency of government rather than individually—a great expansion of public education: these all imply that a larger share of the flow of spending than before the war will be channeled through government. No intelligent person worries how the government will get the necessary money; governments are pretty good at that job, and the British government is particularly good at doing it without incurring monetary inflation. The government will have a larger opportunity than ever to influence the amount of spending so that it may be both steady and increasing.

The consequence is that the economists on the inside, who because they are civil servants cannot write or talk for publication, are reasonably confident that an acceptable outcome can be achieved. They see clearly the technical difficulties and the basic problems not yet solved by the Keynes analysis. They do not expect to keep unemployment down to the maximum set by Beveridge—three percent of the labor force—but they do hope to hold the maximum somewhere between five and eight percent.

But all this calculation is based on the domestic situation. Everyone knows that the British economy is very far from being self-contained. It needs large quantities of imports, and in order to pay for them it must export much more than before the war. Here, in the minds of British planners, is the area of greatest danger. We shall have to discuss it in the next article.

GEORGE SOULE

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The War over Wages

THE PRESIDENT has come home to find the war over wages front-page news again, largely due to the failure of his two civilian chiefs, Economic Stabilizer Vinson and War Mobilizer Byrnes, to handle this important part of their jobs.

All factions of labor are up in arms against further continuance of the Little Steel formula which has governed wage policy for nearly three years. They challenge the accuracy of the government's "cost-of-living" figures used in the formula, contend that profits are more than large enough to absorb wage increases without affecting prices and warn of what will happen to postwar full employment and production unless steps are taken now to guarantee high mass purchasing power then.

The National War Labor Board, without admitting that it has been made impotent by a Vinson regulation subjecting all its decisions to review by him and the OPA, has solved its problem by simply passing the buck to the White House. After months of consideration, the public members of the Board have joined the industry members in the opinion that no revision of the Little Steel formula is necessary, on the ground that by their figures wages have more than kept pace with rising prices. The public members, taking note of the drastic situation which would come with the end of the war in Europe, timidly propose that the wage standards for that period be set through legislation. Those who know the high personal caliber of the public members of the WLB explain that these men would never have subscribed to such a course unless they believed that "passing the buck" was the only way to save the Board at this late date. And saving it is important, they might argue, if only to win a few more such gains as the policy statement approved by the whole Board a few days later, declaring all wages below 55 cents an hour substandard. But both the CIO and the AFL indignantly reject the public members' explanations. The AFL members called their Little Steel report "unjust and deceptive." CIO President Philip Murray stated that the report "completely fails to meet the needs of the nation" and reflects "the frustrated thinking and inaction" of the Board's administration. Both the AFL and the CIO concluded that "labor must now present its case directly to the President."

The Office of Price Administration is sitting in the middle, and none too happily right now. Some time ago, the WLB worked out a system of wage increases known as "fringe adjustments" to take care of certain cases which seemed to demand more than the 15-percent raise limit of the Little Steel formula. By the use of "fringe adjustments" in the form of vacation and sick-leave allowances or payment for time not previously paid for ("portal to portal," etc.), it was possible to satisfy some labor demands and, in theory, maintain the Little Steel formula at the same time. In connection with these cases, Vinson slapped a ruling on the WLB requiring his approval on each decision, the determining factor to be whether the pay boosts would cause price boosts. Then Vinson passed the buck to the OPA, making its price reports the basis for his decisions.

The OPA is subject to ever mounting industry pressure for price increases. Well heeled industry lobbies are no strangers to Capitol Hill, and it is hard for the average congressman to avoid being drawn into fights with the OPA for higher prices on his home-district products. The OPA is constantly embarrassed by having congressmen wander into meetings of its industry advisory committees or other conferences in the open role of lobbyists for special interests. OPA industry divisions have from the earliest days of price control served as notorious hiding places for "dollar-a-year-man" types. Chester Bowles and his associates, who sincerely want to hold prices down, should logically be protected by Vinson as Economic Stabilization Director, instead of being pushed out in front by him as the point of attack for every privilege-seeker in the country. By this policy, labor feels, Vinson is in effect saying to employers, "If you want price increases to cover any wage increases awarded to workers in your plants, persuade the OPA to recommend them to me, and I will either grant the price rise or turn down both wage and price increases."

There has been sharp disagreement between the WLB and Vinson as to the way in which these OPA reports should be used. Most of the time the OPA is in a spot. With industry presenting carefully prepared, plausible cases for increases, often with impressive congressional support, it is very easy for the OPA to say yes. That "yes" as a rule is soon translated in the Vinson code into a "no" on the wage increase originally requested. Wage raises which the WLB has recommended for textile and packing-house workers are now being held up for lack of clearance as to their results on prices. The Packing-House Workers' Union points out that the Big Four packers increased their 1944 profits 270 percent over 1940, whereas the packing-house workers have received no wage increases since 1941. But it is clear from recent testimony of Price Administrator Bowles that Vinson has given him no instructions to look sharply into industry profits when he is investigating wage and price balances. "We have no interest in profits except in cases where a price increase is requested," Bowles told the Senate Banking

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The Gangrene of Race Prejudice

In the case of individuals we seldom can find the chain of cause and effect that makes the difference between a saint and a murderous scoundrel. In the case of whole peoples, the causes stand forth from the million-fold statistics in which aberration balances aberration. The cause of the death of the Third Reich stands out boldly in letters ten thousand feet high. It was race prejudice that elevated the little fool pied piper Hitler to the mastery of the German people. Race prejudice was the gangrene, first insidiously attacking irrelevant toes or little fingers, and finally raging through the whole body.

We Americans hate to admit this. We'd rather accuse the Treaty of Versailles, an incomparably milder treaty than the Germans meant to impose when victorious, as they confidently expected to be. We hate to admit the fact that it was the gangrene of race prejudice that jolted Germany from one of the pinnacles of civilization to a position morally inferior to that of naked cannibals. We hate to admit it because we are conscious of the gangrene of race prejudice, already eating away our own toes and little fingers. Let's cover them up; let's have bright lawyers talk them out of sight; maybe we can fool a just God.—*Dr. Alvin Johnson, writing in the* Bulletin *of the New School for Social Research, New York City.*

and Currency Committee which is considering the extension of the Price Control Act. "In these cases we are careful to see that the industry earns at least as much as it did before the war. We set a floor under profits, not a ceiling over them. . . . Profits are several times as high as they were before the war and have risen year by year since 1939."

Thus the OPA, too, shifts the responsibility for present wage policy back where labor says it belongs, on Stabilizer Vinson and his boss, Mobilizer Byrnes, neither of whom, labor contends, has ever really been willing to shoulder the responsibilities conferred on him by the President.

And there the wage situation stands today. Labor has declared war on the Byrnes-Vinson policies on what it considers to be unassailable grounds. The joint civilian chiefs show every sign of holding their ground unless ordered to retreat by the President. Labor leaders will undoubtedly request an early conference with the President to ask his support for their side, and, most likely, they will be reinforced by a number of Democratic congressmen who are beginning to understand the political importance of the current wage struggle.

For the AFL, the CIO and the Railway Brotherhoods to have revolted against Administration wage policy and been rebuffed last November was one thing. For the same leaders, among whom are some of the most loyal supporters of the Roosevelt Administration, to be kicked in the teeth now, when John L. Lewis is preparing to take the warpath, is quite another. On the necessity of breaking the Little Steel formula, the whole labor movement, including Lewis, is agreed. For the Little Steel formula to be broken and for wage increases to be won as the result of another disastrous mine workers' strike would be almost more than any Roosevelt supporter in labor could stand. His prestige, if not his actual position, would crumble under him, for bread-and-butter issues are still the prime issues in the American labor movement and will certainly remain so for a long time to come. On such an issue, the faction-ridden CIO might conceivably break up. The bare possibility of such a thing already has some Republican politicians and anti-labor employers licking their chops and pulling out their bankrolls. Democratic politicians will certainly stress this aspect of the wage fight to the President.

Labor is quite willing to stand solely on the merits of its case as it has mustered them. As stated by the CIO, this is about the way they line up:

Even the report made by the public members of the WLB against breaking the Little Steel formula, according to Murray, conceded that retail prices have risen 30 percent since the base period of January, 1941, and that basic wage rates, *i. e.*, the price list for work, have risen only 20 percent in the same period. To be sure, in this most recent report, the public members changed the rules in the middle of the game, Murray charges, and based their opinion not on basic wage rates but on "hourly straight-time earnings" instead; by thus "juggling wage statistics" and using a wage measurement based on factors due to the war, earnings are made to appear to have risen 36 percent instead of 20, and therefore no inequity presumably exists. The CIO men hasten to add that the report of the public members even conceded that the differences between basic wage earnings and "straight-time hourly earnings" will largely disappear with VE Day. The differences come from added pay as incentive for increased production, from rapid promotions and upgrading, from premiums on second or third-shift work. Most of these will go, the CIO agrees with the WLB, at the end of fighting in Europe, and labor will be back to the basic-wage-rate structure. Real wages then will depend on the relation of that pay to the cost of living. And the CIO says it has not been able to find a cost-of-living expert in Washington who thinks that prices will not increase still more than the present 30 percent in that period.

The CIO says first, that unless wage increases are granted now, workers will be worse off after VE Day than they were when the war broke out. In the second place, CIO leaders say, wages must be raised now if we are to have 60, or even 55, million jobs and full

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production after the war. Industrialists like Charles Wilson of General Electric and many a conservative economist agree with labor that wage rates will have to go up if production and employment are to increase to a satisfactory level after the war, but they overlook the psychology in the matter of *when* wages must go up. Labor knows that you usually can't get a raise in the midst of layoffs, so that labor must get its wage increases before VE Day and the cutbacks which are sure to come.

Technological developments perfected in this war have resulted in what the National Association of Manufacturers has called "incredibly increased productivity." Many fewer workers will be required to carry on in these jobs, and unless substantially increased wages are paid to those who remain, there will not be enough purchasing power to employ the displaced workers, the CIO argues basically.

Furthermore, labor says, the fear that inflation will descend on us if we go in for wage increases now is nonsense. They maintain that workers will not buy consumer goods if they feel that prices are unreasonably high. They will simply keep their money in their pockets, or in war bonds, where a large part of it is going already.

And finally, labor argues, with the wartime profit structure what it is, there is absolutely no danger of inflation from increased wages so long as the raises are taken out of extra profits. The CIO uses Bowles's figures to show that present profit margins are adequate to absorb practically all of the increases requested in the CIO cases now before the WLB; corporation profits after taxes rose from $7 billion in 1941 to $10 billion in 1944. "An increase of 20 percent in the . . . wage and salary bill, even if all taken away from profits, would still leave profits before taxes approximately at the level of 1940," Philip Murray said in a recent speech.

The President comes back to trouble on the wage front. Regardless of the extent of the general labor dissatisfaction, however, he can count on both AFL and CIO leaders to hold the line on their voluntary "no-strike" pledge for as long as possible. He can place the principal blame for the wage turmoil on Vinson and Byrnes, who are guilty of ingrown economic thinking, of taking an old-fashioned view of affairs, overlooking the dynamics of today's wage problems limited to statistical measurement of wages against "cost-of-living." Labor has good ground for its demand that "there must be a comprehensive and drastic revision" of WLB policies and substantial adjustment of present wage rates. The President can save the nation worry and suffering by taking time out from global duties to look closely into the causes of the war over wages and issue new orders to his home-front lieutenants. Unless he intervenes, the wage war will last long and cut deep.

Washington HELEN FULLER

The New Pan-Arabism

THE MIDDLE EAST is one of the world's potentially most dangerous trouble spots. The assassination, last November, of Lord Moyne, British Resident Minister in the Middle East, and the recent murder, upon Egypt's declaration of war against Germany, of Premier Ahmed Maher Pasha, only dramatize a complicated pattern of rivalry among the great powers, commercial competition, oil imperialism, nationalist extremism, economic tension and cultural antagonisms.

Although the official declarations of the Crimean Conference did not mention the Middle East, some of the ticklish problems of this area are known to have been discussed. Silence presumably indicates that no agreement was reached. It underlies the explosive character of the existing situation which will certainly be a testing ground of the future relations among the great powers. The meetings between Messrs. Churchill and Roosevelt and a number of Arab potentates are additional proof of the importance of the Middle East in world politics.

With the exception of still French-controlled Syria and Lebanon, the whole Middle East has been a British sphere of influence, both political and economic. But in the course of the present war, outside challenges to Great Britain's exclusive domination have made themselves felt. While Axis intrigues have been successfully eliminated, the Soviet Union and the United States, both Britain's allies, have actively entered the field. The oil resources of Iran and Arabia are serving as cracks through which Russian and American influence is penetrating. While the United States is not as yet known to have exerted direct political pressure on any of the Middle Eastern countries to protect American oil interests,[1] the Soviet Union did intervene last fall in Iran's internal affairs after the Iranian government had turned down a Russian request for concessions in the northern part of the country.

The British, faced with the Soviet-American intrusion into what they consider their sphere of interest,

[1] American participation in the British-controlled Iraqui Petroleum Company is 23.75 percent. The Arabian-American Oil Company (Standard Oil of California and Texas Oil Company) has invested about $100 million in Saudi Arabia. The refinery at Ras-Tanurah, on the Persian Gulf, produces 50,000 barrels daily. The future pipe line from Saudi Arabia will increase American oil production in the Middle East. – H. E.

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appear to be meeting it with a technique of contemporary diplomacy now generally accepted. It consists in the ability of one of the "Big Three" to confront the other two with a *fait accompli* and then ask for its recognition. The Soviet Union used this technique in building an Eastern European regional system under its hegemony. The United States is busy strengthening the ties of the Pan-American regional system at the Mexico City conference. Great Britain is evidently sponsoring the new Pan-Arab movement which is about to be institutionalized in the establishment of a league of Arab states.

The idea of a Pan-Arab union is an old one. What is new is its British sponsorship. Although the Arab countries, with the exception of Lebanon and Palestine, are united in the Islamic religion, earlier efforts at union failed because this common ground was insufficient to bridge the many cultural and economic differences among them, the conflicting claims for leadership and those national antagonisms which the British, at an earlier date, exploited for their "divide and rule" policy. The new Pan-Arab movement, in spite of unquestionably indigenous roots, is clearly a power-politics solution, occasioned by Great Britain's need for common action with the Arab states as whose "good neighbor" and spokesman she will confront the Soviet Union and the United States when Middle Eastern questions are discussed at future meetings of the "Big Three."

The stage was set for Anglo-Arab collaboration in 1939 when the British government issued its White Paper placing severe restrictions on further Jewish immigration into Palestine. The anti-British revolt of 1941 in Irak, allegedly Nazi-inspired but actually impossible if local conditions had not been favorable, emphasized the expediency of continuing the new conciliatory policy. By November, 1943, during the Lebanon crisis, Anglo-Arab coöperation had blossomed. Not only did Arab leaders in Lebanon appeal to the British for intervention against the French, but a marked degree of interest in Lebanese events was manifested by Egypt's Premier Mustapha Nahas Pasha, a leading Pan-Arab advocate. It suggested that even then the unrest in Lebanon might well have been inspired by Pan-Arabian elements with British blessing.

The seeds thus planted are now bearing fruit. Reports from the Pan-Arab conference at Cairo, which opened on February 14, 1945, indicate that what is holding the Arab leaders together is not a positive common interest, but rather a negative policy of opposition to renewed Jewish immigration into Palestine and to continued French control of Lebanon and Syria, where France is rapidly strengthening her military forces.

It may be expected, then, that the future Arab league, whose creation is the purpose of the Cairo conference, will maintain close relations with Great Britain. This, at least, gives meaning to some recent political changes in the Arab countries. An earlier Pan-Arab conference, held last fall in Alexandria, had apparently failed to give the British sufficient guarantees of coöperation. The British thereupon refused to underwrite the Pan-Arab union. Meanwhile, however, and certainly not accidentally, all the principal figures then participating in the Pan-Arab discussions have fallen from power.[1] The new conferees give every evidence of being British puppets.

It is impossible to understand the *modus operandi* of the alliance between the British and the Arab states without an appreciation of the clearly reactionary class character of the Pan-Arab league. One of the greatest threats both to the British and to Arab leadership has been the increasing feeling among the common people against the unequal systems of land tenure and the excessive privileges of the landowners in all Arab countries. The resulting domestic unrest, aggravated by war conditions, has facilitated the emergence of Soviet influence among anti-feudal Arabs of the middle and working classes. Just as the Arabs need British help for their anti-Jewish policy in Palestine and anti-French policy in the Levant, so the British are anxious to bolster the present ruling classes with whom they are doing business and whose power is the best safeguard against any popular revolutionary movement. For the Arab ruling groups are as much interested in maintaining stability in the Middle East as is British imperialism.

Whether the British will be able to preserve the *status quo* after the war depends on Allied recognition of their predominant interest in the Middle East as well as on domestic developments inside the various Arab countries. Some concessions will certainly have to be made to the Soviet Union and the United States. Exclusiveness is out of the question. Moreover, the removal of wartime restrictions will give new impetus to the native democratic movements whose fierce nationalism opposes not only British imperialism, but also the ancient ruling classes, whose alliance with the British, in the disguise of Pan-Arabism, is bitterly resented. The shot fired at Premier Maher Pasha by a young Egyptian nationalist who, it is reported, had been thrown into a concentration camp for congratulating the leader of Irak's anti-British revolt in 1941, is symptomatic.

HEINZ EULAU

[1] This is particularly true of the Egyptian ex-Premier Mustapha Nahas Pasha, a prime mover in the native Pan-Arab movement, who was dismissed by King Farouk immediately after the adjournment of the Alexandria conference, on October 8, 1944, allegedly because be was governing in a dictatorial manner. He belonged to the Wafd Party, which stands for mild social reforms, opposition to the reactionary clerics and rich landowners, political rather than mere cultural Pan-Arabism, and Egyptian independence from Great Britain. On the other hand, King Farouk, the religious leaders and the capitalists favor closer ties with Britain as well as conservatism in domestic affairs. Nahas Pasha was fired because he opposed British control of the Pan-Arab league which he godfathered at Alexandria. – H. E.

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Washington Notes

FDR's Opening Gambit

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT is going forward efficiently and methodically in the tremendous drama of getting a world security organization established and the United States into it. So far he has proceeded so deftly that you almost forget the skill of the performance. As a matter of fact, the affair is shaping as well as anybody could hope and my judgment would be—as of this moment—that he has a better chance of winning American adherence to Dumbarton Oaks and political internationalism, than to Bretton Woods and economic internationalism. In fact I strongly feel that the campaign for Bretton Woods is being dangerously neglected.

I watched the President last week from the moment he was rolled on to the blue-carpeted House floor until he was rolled off again after making his report on the Yalta conference. It seemed to me his purpose primarily was to establish a mood, as a conscious step in a developing plan. He said little that was new. The important thing was the way he said it. Obviously his job now is to "sell" the agreement he has made with Stalin and Churchill to the public and the Senate, while Stettinius ties the matter up with Latin America. I have evidence, which satisfies me, that Roosevelt regards the Yalta understanding as a tremendous achievement. I believe that even with his ever present sense of history, he is impressed by what he thinks he has accomplished in harmonizing Big Three differences.

Roosevelt, then, set out to convince Congress. It was a unique experience. He had written his speech with Judge Rosenman on his trip home. He consciously adopted a chatty style of delivery that was folksy to the point of pedestrianism. When you try to persuade people, you don't harangue them, you converse with them. Oratorical pyrotechnics don't sell butter and eggs. Mr. Roosevelt even used his own physical handicap to enhance this effect. There, for the first time in living history, a President sat literally on the same level with Congress—not talking down to it from the elevated Speaker's dais. For the first time he referred publicly to his paralyzed legs, in humorous reference to leaving off the "ten pounds of steel" of his braces, which permit him, when he wears them, an awkward, tortured, erect movement.

I think the braces are gone for good. He did not use them even at his Inaugural, and only twice, I believe, in his election campaign. This first direct reference after 12 years in office possibly suggests something important: Mr. Roosevelt's own changed view of himself. He need no longer pretend he is something, physically, that he isn't; he is done with the awkward pretense of walking to the rostrum between the arms of valet and Jimmie Roosevelt; maybe it means he has no more political ambitions. Instead of that, he deftly slipped from wheelchair to red velvet chair-of-state, on the floor of the House, within a dozen feet or so of Burt Wheeler, and there he sat, smiling, casual, comfortable and relaxed for an hour, with 14 microphones in front of him, extemporizing and ad-libbing to members of Congress. I have no doubt he knew exactly what he was about, that there was artifice in the artlessness, a conscious playing down of drama and heroics. I am not quite sure that Mr. Roosevelt succeeded in achieving a full mood of intimacy with so big a crowd, and my friends tell me it made for a poor radio speech. But I can think of no more disarming demonstration to a suspicious Senate of the non-political character of what lies ahead.

Make no mistake about it, a powerful faction of the banking fraternity is out to kill the International Monetary Fund agreement, achieved by 44 nations at Bretton Woods—and is more than likely to do it. Dean Acheson of the State Department says such a defeat would be "calamitous," for the fund implements all the coöperative generalizations implicit in Dumbarton Oaks. The fund would help small nations over financial emergencies and would serve as a barrier to any one nation's juggling its exchange ratio to undercut competitors and export its own unemployment to its neighbor.

The bankers are organized in a powerful pressure group against this plan which they fear trespasses on their own prerogatives. A good many newspapers, like the New York *Times* and the *Herald Tribune*, which are internationally progressive in the political field, won't follow it through in the economic field, and are supporting the bankers. The primary difficulty, perhaps, is to make anybody understand what it is all about. It involves the mystical subject of gold, and lends itself to all sorts of chauvinistic demagoguery. At a conference here last week I heard representatives of the State and Treasury Departments deplore the fact that they don't have funds to get out a booklet answering the American Bankers' Association and explaining their side of the case. All I can say is, the Administration had better do something quick. The situation needs a simple, diagrammatic, A, B, C explanation that anybody can understand. The best mass educational job of this sort that has ever been done, I think, was that by the CIO-PAC in the recent election. More and more this looks like the first big test of America's willingness to give postwar economic coöperation, and so far the matter seems to be going pretty much by default.

Incidental Notes.—It's getting so a Washington correspondent needs a medical degree: a flock of new rumors about the President's physical condition occurred in his absence. I have seen him twice since his return, and to these unprofessional eyes he looks tanned, refreshed and in the best of health. . . . Vice President Truman is reviving all those genial arts of hospitality and social contact at which ex-Vice President Garner was so adept and ex-Vice President Wallace so inept; Truman is no Wallace on the intellectual side, but he's a long way ahead of Garner, and knows how to keep tabs on votes. Incidentally, he predicts success for Dumbarton Oaks. . . . Roosevelt and Stalin are reported to have got on famously at Yalta. Stalin was affable, even deferential; on several occasions he inquired if insistence on a point would embarrass Roosevelt politically at home, then agreed to drop it. . . . United States attachés learned one Russian word at Yalta fast, "Stoy!" meaning "Halt!" and followed by the click of a rifle bolt.

Washington T. R. B.

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The Brooklyn Dodger

IN THE PRESENT STYLE of 20th Century-Fox epics, "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" deals obviously, lushly, safely, respectfully and theatrically with a tenement family named Nolan, who live poorly and indestructibly in Brooklyn during the twenties. It is one of those rare Hollywood films which earnestly endeavors to show the drabness and unhappiness in an American family and in a section of American society. The young mother of the Nolans (Dorothy McGuire) scrapes and goes sour on her life and her husband (James Dunn) trying to get their children (Peggy Ann Garner and Ted Donaldson) through school. Her husband is a drunkard who works off and on as a singing waiter and finally dies of pneumonia and alcoholism. The picture then gets back to Hollywood normal with everybody eating banana splits, the mother about to marry a Gibraltar-like policeman (Lloyd Nolan), the daughter starting on her first puppy love affair, the tree in the tenement court, which was cut down earlier in the film, starting to grow again and somebody announcing that they have certainly had a good time being poor. I appreciate the earlier part of the film for dealing seriously with an unhappy segment of American life, and for trying to find some conflict in the American family (the mother and father falling out, the daughter siding with the father), but I don't like the movie.

The sets have the thin-walled quality of a studio-built Williamsburg and are jammed stagily with people, noise, confusion, quarrels and bric-a-brac, all obviously citified in the same way that Mrs. Nolan is made to be on the go too much. The sets don't matter a great deal, because they are hardly used or seen. The main fact in all of the scenes is that you are supposed to look at the people's faces and listen to what they say, and when they stop talking the scene changes. All of the poetry about the tree in the tenement court, its being cut down and then starting to grow again, is confined to looking at the people's faces as they talk about it, and Francie's rapturous tours of the dime store, the library, and her Sunday walks with her father into a fashionable neighborhood are only as involved with their environment as one street car is in passing another. The most destructive element in the film is its photography, which blankets the poverty in lovely shadows and pearly sentimentality; the least comfortable element is the embarrassing, stiff lower-class speech that sounds like the talk used in old melodramas of the South. I liked the choice of James Dunn as an alcoholic waiter and of Miss Garner as the girl, but Dorothy McGuire looks like a respectable Junior Miss, Joan Blondell is pure fantasy as the adulterous Aunt Cissy, and a good actor, Lloyd Nolan, is awful as the cop. The acting is a theatrical kind that is carefully elaborated and its effects made very round, definite and monolithic.

The movie shows a dismaying lack of skill, imagination or daring in telling itself visually. Its material is mostly confined to showing how the life of poor people is dominated by the scrabble for money, and only in a scene of childbirth is there any real terror and hardness in the faces and gestures, any drabness in the photography and any complexity of thought and feeling. It seemed to me the only place where for a time the picture tries to show what the actual life of its people is like, though I liked a glimpse of Francie trying not to step on the lines of a sidewalk, the beauty Miss McGuire manages when she waits up for her husband, and a scene in which Dunn sings "Annie Laurie" and refuses to answer his wife. The life that the mother turns sour over is recorded in one bare instant showing her scrubbing the staircase; the rest of her movie time is spent telling her sister, husband, children, and mother that she has to be hard to make ends meet, and being told by them that she shouldn't be hard. The characters are narrowed into one or two traits, studied vaguely and unimaginatively expressed—Dunn as a happy, friendly, Saroyan figure, by the easy, unincisive device of having innumerable people say what he is and having him sing "Molly Malone" coming home from work. His trouble getting jobs happens off-screen, and his alcoholism is taken care of by a hurried moment one day when he comes home drunk, and is got through so quickly, pleasantly and neatly that the worrying that is done over it seems silly. MANNY FARBER

The Bandwagon

"We smile contemptuously at threats that our leaders will be brought to trial for war crimes and will receive the death penalty," Goebbels said. – *From a broadcast speech by Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels on February 28, 1945, as quoted in the New York* Herald Tribune.

Henry Wallace, in his loud and endless championship of the "Common Man," lays bare the basic fault of the New Deal—un-Americanism. – *From an editorial by Ruth F. Van Ness, editor of the Wyckoff* News *(New Jersey).*

Marxism (with a Vengeance)

A new book by Anna Rochester, *Capitalism and Progress*, is announced for March publication by International Publishers. In this study, the author shows how the capitalist system, in developing from earlier relationships, has marked new progress for the human race despite serious maladjustments reflected in periodic crises, and discusses those new developments which give rise to the hope that still further progress can be realized under an expanded economy envisaged by the proposed plan of 60 million jobs after the war. – *Press release from International Publishers.*

On the Home Front

On the way out, Mrs. [James A.] Farley said to the proprietor, Sherman Billingsley, who was standing at the door smiling and bidding his guests good night,

"Remember when it was a free country?" – *From an account of how New York night clubs reacted to the new 12 o'clock curfew, in* PM.

That All-Out Effort

Members of the congregation of the Warren Baptist Church have beaten by five minutes the record time for reading the Bible from cover to cover. Starting at 12:02 a. m. last New Year's Day, reading in series, the forty-five persons participating in the project finished the book in 17 hours 40 minutes. – *UP dispatch from Warren, Maine.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of the New Republic. *Please enclose the original clipping.* – THE EDITORS

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Correspondence

Two Bills against Discrimination

SIR: I want to thank you for the splendid editorial paragraph in your February 5 issue urging the reintroduction and passage of the GI assault bill, which would make civilian violence against members of the armed forces a federal offense. One of the great ironies of World War II, the object of which is to defeat the foremost racists of all times, is that the wearing of a uniform of the United States by a Negro, in itself, provokes violence against him in certain sections of this country.

Happily, the GI assault bill, H.R. 1528, was reintroduced on January 16. Although several members of the House Judiciary Committee, to which it was referred, have expressed to us their wholehearted support of the measure, favorable action on it by the Committee and the House will require every ounce of pressure that fair-minded people can bring to bear.

In connection with this same general problem, you will also be interested in a bill introduced by Representative Adam Clayton Powell Jr., of New York, H.R. 1925, to amend the Interstate Commerce Act so as to prohibit the segregation of persons in interstate travel because of their race or color. H.R. 1925, which is now in the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, likewise merits the support of every decent American. While this bill applies to civilians as well as members of the armed forces, its passage would come as a relief to thousands of Negro servicemen and women who are inconvenienced, humiliated, assaulted, and in some instances killed, because of the enforcement of Jim Crow travel laws.

LESLIE S. PERRY, Administrative Assistant,
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Washington, D. C.

Squalor on the Air

SIR: I was deeply interested in Listener's article in the *New Republic* of February 26, having on account of temporarily bad eyes been thrown on the sordid distractions of our radio for the past two years.

I may say that I think it is growing steadily more sordid; I think its effect on the American mind is a real menace. Tragedy and soap, murder and tooth powder—even the Philharmonic now on rubber—it's all very squalid and nerveracking. And this in addition to recognized lying.

My revolt is taking the shape of a personal boycott, and I have promised myself to buy *nothing* I hear advertised on the air, and this I am saying loudly and generally to the world and in the shops. I am trying to get others to join. However, it would, I fear, need a million or so converts.

In any case, it is heartening to read Listener's article and to feel public opinion growing articulate.

Washington, D. C. L. B.

Religion and a Lasting Peace

SIR: The letter released to the press by 1,600 Protestant ministers, objecting to Catholic representation at the peace conference, was most unfortunate.

There are two major objections to the point of view of those Protestant ministers:

1. It is a mistake to oppose the representation of any interested religious groups at the peace conference. Certainly the Catholics, the Protestants and the Jews will be and should be represented at that conference. They have major interests which should be considered. I believe that our Jewish brethren have already asked, and rightly so, for representation at the peace table.

2. The second major objection to the view of the 1,600 Protestant ministers is that religion has an obligation to aid in the effort to establish a decent and durable peace. Religious forces must not run away from this responsibility, and they must not be prevented by prejudice from participating in every effort to carry out their obligations. It seems to me that the religious forces of the world have for too long a time been avoiding their international responsibilities. This is a total war and the peace must be a total peace. No powerful spiritual or moral force in the world should be prevented from exercising the full measure of its influence in bringing about a just and lasting peace and a better world order.

Instead of excluding any religious group, why not invite representatives of all the major religious organizations of the world to present their views?

THE REV. L. M. BIRKHEAD,
New York City National Director, Friends of Democracy

From The New Republic Mail Bag

The Committee for Equal Justice for Mrs. Recy Taylor, Room 204, 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City 3, asks for support in its campaign to bring to justice the six white men who kidnaped and raped Mrs. Recy Taylor, young Negro mother, in Abbeville, Alabama, on September 3, 1944. A special Alabama grand jury has twice failed to arrive at the unanimous decision necessary to bring an indictment against the rapists, the case having been returned to them a second time at the instigation of Alabama's Governor Chauncey Sparks. The Committee asks for help in the form of financial contributions, and also that letters be written to Governor Sparks, congratulating him on his part in the case and urging him to see that the criminals are prosecuted.

In a letter emphasizing the need for a federation of all liberal organizations, R. F. Donnan, of Waterville, Ohio, makes the following suggestions for improvement in the operation of the PAC, which would be the largest member of such a federation: Money should be used more effectively in district and local organizations; candidates should not be allowed to serve on committees; leadership and direction should be provided for those people who are willing to work on the local level if they are given the opportunity.

A copy of *EM*, camp newspaper at the Army Air Forces Bombardier School, Big Spring, Texas, is sent us by its editor, S/Sgt. Dale L. Francis. *EM* is proposing that the USO be formed as a permanent agency and that after the war USO clubs be continued as recreation centers for teen-age groups, as one means of meeting the problem of juvenile delinquency.

The Liberal Party of Kings County, New York, is sponsoring a series of ten forums on New York City community affairs, to begin Saturday, March 10, at two p.m. The first meeting will be held at the Hotel St. George, Brooklyn, when Joseph McGoldrick, Comptroller of the City of New York, will speak on "Our City—How It Operates." The next nine weekly meetings will be held each Saturday thereafter at two p.m. at the Liberal Party headquarters, 66 Court Street, Brooklyn, New York. On the Friday evening prior to each forum, the guest speaker will broadcast his talk over Station WEVD at ten p.m.

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Books in Review

James Thurber's Dream Book

THERE ARE two ways to review the selected writings and drawings of James Thurber. The wrong way, I think, is to be deeply impressed by the fact that Thurber is a funny man and try to match his book with a funny review, making great use of exaggeration and overstatements, which you have been taught to regard as the essence of American humor. The other and somewhat revolutionary method is the one I should like to follow. It consists in reviewing his book exactly as if it were the work of any other skillful and serious American writer.

The Thurber Carnival[1] contains thirty-three of his "pieces," a general term to describe his stories, almost-stories, light essays and autobiographical sketches. All but one of them first appeared in the *New Yorker*. Most of them have also appeared in one or another of his earlier volumes, but the first six were previously uncollected. In addition to the pieces, there is "My Life and Hard Times," complete with illustrations; and the selection ends with 125 pages of Thurber's drawings. These suffer from being reduced to a maximum width of four inches; they sometimes lose the effect of movement and part of the detail gets blurred (as note "Zero Hour—Connecticut" and "Gettysburg" on pages 366-67); but it is good to have so many of them together, even if we have to look at them through a reading glass. The pieces are intact, and they are just as funny or sad or frightening as when we read them the first time.

Most of them might have been written to illustrate the difference between wit and humor. Wit, says the *Shorter Oxford*, is "that quality of speech or writing which consists in the apt association of thought and expression, calculated to surprise by its unexpectedness; later always with ref. to the utterance of brilliant or sparkling things in an amusing way." Humor, says *Webster's Collegiate*, "implies, commonly, broader human sympathies than wit, and a more kindly sense of the incongruous, often blended with pathos." There is not much wit in Thurber's writing, although there is plenty of it in his conversation. Occasionally in a story he permits himself a relatively brilliant or sparkling metaphor—he says, for example, "This midsummer Saturday had got off to a sulky start, and now, at three in the afternoon, it sat, sticky and restive, on our laps"; but for the most part he confines himself to the almost businesslike description of incongruous situations that are often blended with pathos.

He doesn't always bother to be funny. Eight of the pieces, by my count, are quite serious in effect and intention, and several of the others balance on the edge between farce and disaster, like a clown on a very high trapeze. Four of them —all funny ones—end with the murder of the hero, and two—both serious—end with his natural death (one of these last heroes is a dog). Four others end with dreams of killing or being killed, and two with the hero of one and the villainess of the other reduced to raving madness. There are fifteen pieces—almost half the selections in the book—that are largely based on nightmares, hallucinations or elaborate and cruel practical jokes. Entering Thurber's middle-class world is like wandering into a psychiatric ward and not being quite sure whether you are a visitor or an inmate. The author himself bustles around in a white jacket, but sometimes he stops to say in a pleasant, matter-of-fact voice, "You know, they don't suspect. They think I'm a doctor."

He writes so naturally and conversationally that it is hard to realize how much work goes into his stories. His art is in fact extremely conscious, and it is based on a wide knowledge of contemporary writing. In a letter to Fred B. Millett, written in 1939, Thurber listed some of his favorite authors: Henry James first of all, then Conrad Aiken, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Edmund Wilson and Willa Cather, among others. The list would indicate, he said, "that I like the perfectly done, the well ordered, as against the sprawling chunk of life. . . . I also owe a debt to E. B. White . . . whose perfect clarity of expression is it seems to me equaled by very few and surpassed by simply nobody. . . . I came to the *New Yorker* a writer of journalese and it was my study of White's writing, I think, that helped me to straighten out my prose so that people could see what it meant." Besides learning to write with an easy flow and coherence that very few authors achieve, he also learned to omit everything inessential, including the winks, the rib-nudgings and the philosophical remarks of older American humorists. He achieves a sort of costly simplicity, like that of well tailored clothes or good conversation.

Within his fixed limits of length and sympathy and subject, one feels almost nothing but admiration for Thurber's work; one's only regret is that he hasn't made the limits broader. Other things being equal, a good long story is better than a good short one; and most of Thurber's begin and end within 3,000 words, a convenient length for the *New Yorker*. Most of his characters are upper-middle-class couples from the upper Middle West, who have moved to New York, prospered financially and bought or rented houses in Connecticut. His favorite subject is their domestic quarrels, which he portrayed in a famous series of drawings, here reproduced, as "The War Between Men and Women."

Henry James in his time was also impressed by the conflict between American business or professional men and their wives. In *The American Scene*, he described it as "a queer deep split or chasm between the two stages of personal polish, the two levels of the conversible state, at which the sexes have arrived." It was the wives who had reached what he regarded as the much higher level. "Nothing," he said, "is more concomitantly striking than the fact that the women, over the land—allowing for every element of exception—appear to be of a markedly finer texture than the men." He recommended the subject to the painter of man-

[1] The Thurber Carnival, written and illustrated by James Thurber. New York: Harper and Brothers. 382 pages. $2.75.

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ners, and Thurber has adopted it as his own. When he describes the split or chasm, however, it is as if each of the sexes had crossed to the opposite side. The women in his stories are hard, logical, aggressive; they have all the virtues and vices that James assigned to businessmen. The husbands, on the other hand, are widely read, dreamy, introspective; they are helpless without their wives, but at the same time they try to escape into an imagined world of men. Thus Walter Mitty, driving the family car, pictures himself as the commander of a huge, hurtling eight-engined navy hydroplane. He imagines the crew looking up and grinning as a storm beats against the wings. "The Old Man'll get us through," they say to one another. "The Old Man ain't afraid of Hell!" . . . "Not so fast! You're driving too fast," says Mrs. Mitty; and the hydroplane of Walter Mitty's dream comes hurtling down.

Almost all of Thurber's heroes are dreamers and escapists, even when they are happily married. The author defends them in his illustrated "Fables for Our Time." The moral of one fable is, "Who flies afar from the sphere of our sorrow is here today and here tomorrow"; of another, "Run, don't walk, to the nearest desert island." In his autobiographical sketches, Thurber describes two easy methods for escaping into a fantastic world: by sound and by sight. The first method consists in misunderstanding or misinterpreting words and phrases. Thus, he hears a station agent repeating time and again over the telephone, "Conductor Reagan on the 142 has the lady the office was asking about"; and soon, brooding over the sentence, he imagines himself among silky, desperate spies. On another occasion his maid, who always mispronounces words, comes to his study and says, "They are here with the reeves." His hired man, who has the same bad habit, tells him, "I go hunt grotches in de voods," and again, "We go to the garrick now and become warbs." The servants are referring to wreaths and crotches and wasps in the garret; but before Thurber succeeds in unraveling their remarks, they have sent him wandering off into surrealist landscapes that he compares, at one point, to the secret world of Salvador Dali.

His other means of escape is simply by taking off his glasses. Because his vision is defective, the whole world thereupon assumes a different shape for him. On one such occasion, so he says, "I saw the Cuban flag flying over a national bank, I saw a gay old lady with a gray parasol walk right through the side of a truck, I saw a cat roll across a street in a small striped barrel, I saw bridges rise lazily into the air, like balloons." Reading these lines, and the rest of "The Admiral on the Wheel," one can scarcely help thinking of a famous passage from Rimbaud's "Alchemy of the Word":

> I habituated myself to simple hallucination: I would see quite honestly a mosque instead of a factory, a school of drummers composed of angels, barouches on the roads of the sky, a drawing-room at the bottom of a lake: monsters, mysteries; the announcement of a musical comedy would cause horrors to rise before me.
>
> Then I explained my magical sophistries by the hallucination of words!
>
> I ended by finding sacred the disorder of my mind.

There is in fact a curious similarity between one type of fantastic American humor and the current in European poetry that is represented in various phases by Rimbaud and Lautréamont, by expressionism, dadaism and surrealism. None of these schools has flourished here (although surrealism now has more disciples than the others possessed), and I think the reason may be that our sense of rightness is offended when we hear a young man proclaiming that he has a wild, satanic imagination whose disorder he finds sacred, and then describing his dreams. But the truth is that we enjoy fantasy much more than the French; and we gladly listen to the same type of dreams when they are described by Thurber in a matter-of-fact voice and with a self-deprecatory air.

MALCOLM COWLEY

Red China in the News

Report from Red China, by Harrison Forman. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 250 pages. $3.
Red Star over China, by Edgar Snow. New York: The Modern Library. 514 pages. 95 cents.

THE FIRST REPORT to the nation on the "Communist" regions of north and northwest China, from a member of the foreign press party to visit those regions last year, has now appeared. In his *Report from Red China*, Harrison Forman, correspondent for the New York *Herald Tribune*, tells a graphic story of the five months he spent in the "Border Region," of which Yenan is the capital, and with the Eighth Route Army in the field fighting the Japanese. As documentation he has added 65 excellent photographs out of a collection of 1,000 taken by himself, and a number of valuable maps and sketches of the 15 mountain guerrilla bases in the rear of the Japanese.

"... a stimulating book."
—*Journal of Philosophy*

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OF THE
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By Felix Kaufmann
Professor, Department of Philosophy of the Graduate Faculty, New School for Social Research

"... a penetrating discussion that throws much needed light on a number of fundamental questions connected not only with the social sciences, but with science and the theory of knowledge in general . . . written throughout with admirable clarity . . . a very able piece of work indeed."—C. J. Ducasse, *Brown University.*

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Briefly and deftly, Forman relates the long struggle of foreign correspondents in Chungking for permission to visit the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies to prove or disprove the international propaganda carried on against them by the Kuomintang, or ruling party, of which the Chungking government is the instrument. They began this struggle after General Joseph Stilwell had urged Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to use nearly half a million Kuomintang troops, blockading the guerrillas, against the Japanese offensive which began last spring. The Generalissimo rejected these proposals and indulged in the usual propaganda, charging that the guerrillas do not fight the Japanese. Under pressure of American and Chinese criticism, the Generalissimo finally yielded to the correspondents.

Without any attempt at political interpretation, Forman sets down all that passed before his eyes en route to the northwest. In Sian and other Kuomintang centers, the correspondents were lavishly entertained—and trailed everywhere by spies on bicycles. In the concentration camp near Sian, a few trained seals among the prisoners declared that they were "refugees" from the Communist areas and had *asked* the Sian authorities to lock them up and reform their minds! Forman publishes an amusing document, delivered surreptitiously to him at the time, telling him all the Kuomintang tricks for deceiving foreigners.

Passing finally through the blockade into Eighth Route Army territory, the lavish receptions ended. Instead, the correspondents saw one brigade of garrison troops scattered far and wide, cultivating vast areas of reclaimed waste land, their guns stacked in the fields. Others, with villagers, were spinning and weaving, and all were well nourished, well clothed and enthusiastic. From that time on, the press party was in a new land in which every human being was engaged in fighting, studying or working—or doing all three.

Forman devotes the major part of his book to describing the military, economic, political and educational conditions in the guerrilla regions which now embrace parts of eight northwestern, northern and central provinces, including certain coastal regions. Eighty to ninety million people in these areas have now been liberated and are engaged in some form of anti-Japanese activity—fighting, sabotage, espionage, or in agricultural or industrial production. More than two million civilians, still tillers or artisans, are now armed and trained as "minute-men." Some of the most moving stories—and photographs—in Forman's book are about these "minute-men," including their manufacture and use of hand-grenades, land mines and other weapons with which they fight the Japanese. Forman watched a popular election such as now characterizes all the liberated areas. All men and women over 18 are enfranchised and elect their own administrative organs in which Communist participation is limited by decree to one-third.

The Eighth Route and New Fourth regulars, according to statistics here published, total about 570,000. Since the war began, they have suffered some 400,000 casualties, including 535 officers above the rank of colonel—casualties which almost equal the present strength of the armies. All are volunteers. For every man who fell in action, a local guerrilla or a "minute-man" stepped in to fill the breach. There are excellent descriptions of the famous cave hospitals—filled with wounded men, but without medical supplies at the time—managed by an American doctor. In Yenan, and later at the front, he talked with some of the 300 Japanese war prisoners now organized into the Japanese People's Emancipation League under the leadership of the Japanese Communist, Susumu Okano.

This is a book of pure reporting, and thus lacks the broad political interpretation of books by Edgar Snow, or of Owen Lattimore's recent *Solution in Asia*. Its great value lies in its eye-witness observations and in its recorded conversations with all elements of the population. The most graphic and moving sections are on the two months Forman spent in the field with the troops. A democrat, Forman emerged with the conviction that the Chinese Communists are fighting a democratic people's war. According to reliable reports, this is the conclusion of all the foreign correspondents, and of the American Military Mission which followed them.

It can be said, generally, that Forman picks up the story of Communist China where Edgar Snow's *Red Star over China* left off. Snow completed his book in Peiping in July, 1937, following six months in the field with the old Chinese Red Army. He produced a masterpiece of historical reporting which opened a new era in our understanding of the Chinese revolution. In the Modern Library edition, Snow has added an interesting preface describing the international repercussions caused by *Red Star*, and a concise epilogue bringing events up to June, 1944—where Forman's book begins.

Snow's book, in its present inexpensive edition, can now serve as a sort of textbook of rich historical material for an understanding of the present internal crisis in China. In many countries, including Japan and India, and in China itself, it has already served as a manual in guerrilla warfare for millions of youth. Apart from its authentic material, it is a magnificent job of writing, flavored with the humor and charm that distinguishes the best of Snow's work. To its credit, it is still a thorn in the side of the ruling Kuomintang, and try as that party will, this thorn will remain until the Chinese government takes one simple step: introduces democracy into China.

AGNES SMEDLEY

What Man Has Made of Man

Black Boy, by Richard Wright. New York: Harper and Brothers. 228 pages. $2.50.
A Rising Wind, by Walter White. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 155 pages. $2.

THE MOST searing observation in Frederick Law Olmsted's great reports on the South on the eve of the Civil War is that the tragedy slavery imposed on the Negro hardly outweighed the harm, in myriad forms, it did the white man. The abolition of legal slavery has altered to some degree the "peculiar institutions" that govern race relations in America. Those—black and white—who point with varying degrees of pride or apology to the progress that the Negro has made often overestimate the distance "we have come" because they set the starting point back further than in reality it was, in a manner as false as that of the defenders of the Old South who exalt the status of the slave. Statistics on the rising literacy, income, group and individual achievements, etc., obscure the actual slow rate of the Negro's rise. In the shadowy area of race relationships —in the reaction of white America to Negro development

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and growth—it is difficult to believe that the gains Emancipation promised have been achieved.

Richard Wright's harrowing "record of childhood and youth," as a document, points to failure; as a book, published by Harpers and distributed by the Book of the Month Club, it is a triumphant gain. In itself, it is a record of physical and spiritual poverty and hunger unparalleled in American writing, written with more distinction than one could have foreseen after *Native Son*, of which R. P. Blackmur, I think it was, remarked truly that it was serious in everything but the writing. Where fiction, and particularly melodramatic and didactic fiction, crippled Wright's prose, truth in the form of autobiographical narrative has set it free.

To the burden of being born black in the Deep South, there was added to Wright's childhood misfortunes a tragic family situation, so that from the outset he was denied what for many Southern Negroes has been almost the only redeeming factor in their existence—a rich, warm, inner family life. But if his early years were thus doubly cruel, his experience has given his book an extra dimension, and he has observed his family and his race with the same unsparing vision that he has turned upon the white man and the world he has made. *Black Boy* is the fulfilment of the knowledge and power that was intermittent in *Native Son* and the stories in *Uncle Tom's Children*.

Walter White, executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in *A Rising Wind*, a first-hand report on Negro troops in the European theatre, has ably drawn up a balance sheet on the current military aspects of race relations. The credit side here is certainly higher than in the last war—all in all, the reception of the American Negro soldier by Great Britain, on Mr. White's evidence, is one of the more heartening chapters in an unhappy story—but the author and the reader are continually forced to inquire how long a nation which demands that certain of its citizens be willing to die for it be refused the right decently to live within it. Mr. White is as unsparing and unsentimental toward the Negro as is Mr. Wright, and he never tips the scales in favor of his own people. (It would be difficult to call Walter White a "colored man" since, as is well known, he has light hair, blue eyes, and the color of his skin is approximately that of Franklin Roosevelt.) Although Mr. White does not draw attention to the fact, the inescapable conclusion of his book is similar to that of Olmsted: in oppressing the Negro the American white has crippled himself. One immediate application of this calamity—and *A Rising Wind* underlines this in its closing pages—is "the inevitability of worldwide racial conflicts unless the white nations of the world do an about-face on the issue of race." GEORGE MAYBERRY

Degas as Sculptor

Edgar Degas: Works in Sculpture. A complete catalogue. 112 plates after bronzes, wax models, plaster casts and drawings. Edited by John Rewald. New York: Pantheon Books. $18.

HUYSMANS, who at times had almost prophetic powers as a critic, declared in 1881 that Degas' "Little Dancer Dressed" was the only really modern attempt in sculpture. Other commentators were less inspired and some even ventured to reprove the artist for certain of his departures. Degas, always touchy in such matters, never again allowed a piece of sculpture to leave his studio. After his death, 150 modelings were found, only 72 being sufficiently intact to justify casting into bronze. These were exhibited in 1921 and received some praise, but the present book is the first systematic attempt to explain their values in English.

What emerges is a "reading" parallel to the artist's other attainments. Here again are the lean race horses, the taut little dancing girls, the abundant nudes and other subjects one would expect from Degas. Sometimes his darting mind is seen at work in a drawing—probing, thrusting for just the right attack on a figure. We almost follow his hands as we inspect those works still in wax on their armatures. Again and again one has the sense of looking over the sculptor's shoulder as he works his material.

Degas in his very first modeling was a draughtsman in clay. His race horses seem to be compounded of lines, not of molded materials. Yet sometimes they quicken into a flying movement or precariously hover about the earth in a wonderful leap. The dancers of the eighties somehow expand, as if line were fortified by flesh. Many a dangerous turn is executed and an exquisite moment revealed. But later, in the nudes, the woman studied in pain, the models combing their hair or lifting up an overworked foot, or in a stormy dance, one senses a deeper level. Then, in the very midst of impending blindness, the artist kneaded and pelted his stuff with a new fury. That implacable intelligence of his was swept away by a consuming fire, and he created new figures not unworthy of the late Greeks and fit companions—almost—to those blazing pastels of his final years.

One is indebted to Mr. John Rewald, the editor, for this disclosure. He has ensured it by his choice of photographs and by a rare attention to the reproductions. He might have carried his own remarks farther, and there is even an error as to the date of Degas' death. But it is unlikely that this particular compilation ever will be superseded. JEROME MELLQUIST

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A Reader's List

THE ECONOMIC ORDER AND RELIGION, by Frank H. Knight and T. W. Merriam (Harpers, $3.50). This book deals with the ethical implications of our economic system in a most interesting way. The writers' points of view have opposing philosophic foundations, and rather than attempt to reconcile their attitudes, they proceed to debate the issues in an unusual forensic manner. Professor Knight tries to uncover the rational basis of economic conduct without recourse to religious sanctions. His respect for the scientific approach is commendable, yet he can hardly afford to be disdainful of his adversary's views when his own thinking is based on the essentially supernatural dogma of laissez-faire. Knight insists that he is primarily concerned with economic efficiency rather than with distributive justice. It does not occur to him that Merriam's social planning may bring even greater efficiency than we now have. Professor Merriam's ethical system acknowledges the modern conception of liberalism. Knight rejects such views; to him they are indicative of naïve reformist public opinion. Merriam's liberal religious approach welcomes social reconstruction; Knight can only advocate the restoration of an economy that has ceased to exist. Human betterment, says Knight, is a problem of science rather than good will. Yet science without good will may be easily employed for savagery and destruction. The ethics of the market place, as Merriam implies, should have no place in a truly human economic order.

BREAD UPON THE WATERS, by Rose Pesotta (Dodd, Mead, $3). From 1933 until Pearl Harbor, Rose Pesotta served as organizer, trouble-shooter, picket-line generalissimo, "traveling saleslady"—and, incidentally, vice-president—of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. From Seattle to Puerto Rico, and in the great "sit-downs" of the automobile and rubber workers, to whom the ILGWU lent her, the energetic Miss Pesotta was always "ready . . . to go any place, day or night, in bitter cold, snow, rain, or scorching sun." This book is essentially a militant, enthusiastic personal diary, crowded with the dramatic material of industrial conflict and the not always relevant names of the author's friends and of garment workers from coast to coast. An effective trade-unionist, AFL in membership but CIO in industrial-union outlook (though she scarcely mentions CIO political activities), Miss Pesotta carried a "double-edged sword," smiting anti-union employers and Communist "irresponsibles" impartially; not all her frequent indictments of Communist "obstructionism" seem conclusive, even on the evidence she herself presents.

YOUNG ART AND OLD HECTOR, by Neil M. Gunn (George W. Stewart, $2.75). Neil Gunn's novels of the Scottish Highlands are apt to have a deceptive appearance of mere personal simplicity and charm. They are, however, enriched by an unusual sensitivity to emotional nuances and a thoroughly modern ability to render the shifting relations between environment and character. *Young Art and Old Hector* is a rather light work about the relationship between an eight-year-old farm boy and an eighty-year-old sage. This slight subject is supplemented by folklore and descriptions of some of the highlights in the humdrum existence of the crofting community. Nevertheless, Gunn manages to pierce far enough into his material to be interesting, to write engagingly and to reward his readers with frequent flashes of insight into perennial conflicts.

Contributors

GEORGE SOULE, one of the editors of the *New Republic*, recently returned from an extended visit to London, where he studied the problems of Anglo-American economic coöperation and rivalry in the postwar world.

HELEN FULLER is in charge of the *New Republic's* Washington office.

HEINZ EULAU, an assistant editor of the *New Republic*, was formerly senior analyst in the Department of Justice and is at present writing a book, *The Rebel in Man*.

AGNES SMEDLEY spent 12 years in China as a correspondent and author. Her most recent book is *Battle Hymn of China*.

JEROME MELLQUIST, author of *The Emergence of an American Art*, is working on another book.

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